



Flesh Worn Stone

John A. Burks Jr.

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Steven Alexander has what he considers the perfect life. With a good job, a loving wife, and happy and healthy sons, he has little to complain about. In a flash that life is ripped away and he is thrust into a world of violence and slavery beginning with a brutal home invasion. His sons are murdered in front of him and he and his wife Rebecca are then kidnapped, drugged, and taken to an uncharted tropical island where they awake on a pristine beach in the company of five strangers.

The island is a playground of horror and the kidnapped are forced to participate in the Game, a modern-day rendition of the Coliseum of ancient Rome, where they must compete in acts of murder, rape, and self-mutilation for the amusement of an unseen wealthy elite. Contestants must survive the Game five times to earn their freedom from the island. Losers become the evening meal.

Steven struggles to survive in a world where violence is not only accepted but cheered. He fights to hold on to his wife in a community where cannibalism is survival, brutality is affection, and living another day is at the expense of his own soul. Survival comes with a price, however, and he soon learns that not all of the players are there unwillingly and they've paid a steep price for the opportunity.

Flesh Worn Stone Details

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From Reader Review Flesh Worn Stone for online ebook

CATHERINE says

This is the Hunger Games, meets Battle Royale, meets the Running Man etc. It is more than just killing for survival there are other ugly options thrown in here as well. Not the easiest read due to the graphic violence and general unpleasantness of the story. However once started you are gripped and want to read to the end just to see what happens. This book is like a car accident you don't want to look but somehow you can't help it.

Amy Downs moyer says

Holy Crap - adrenaline Rush !!!

I loved this story from start to finish. I was instantly drawn right in and left with nothing but Gasps. I started reading with wonderment trying to figure out what was going on, and then it hit me like a ton of bricks and I was totally drawn in through my state of shock. I loved that this was not cut and dry and that Mr Burks made me question with every turn of the page "what is going to happen next". And just when you think that you have it all down, you find out that you were wrong.

This is not a story for the faint of heart – Mr. Burks has taken a horrific tale and woven in amazing detail that will leave you shuddering. I was amazed with the characters, and the complexity that was written into them, but alas just when you think that you are going to love a character Mr Burks has a cany way of changing that. I would strongly recommend this novel to anyone who loves a good horror and is not shy of a little (OK A LOT) of gore !

R L says

Wow!

This book was so good I could hardly put it down!! Shocking and in your face evil that lurks in another person's heart and mind that is unfathomable to those of us with a soul. And the betrayal..... What would or wouldn't you do for your loved ones? Very good read!! I can't wait to read the next installment.

Q. says

The island is a playground of horror and the kidnapped are forced to participate in the Game, a modern-day rendition of the Coliseum of ancient Rome, where they must compete in acts of murder, rape, and self-mutilation for the amusement of an unseen wealthy elite. Contestants must survive the Game five times to earn their freedom from the island. Losers become the evening meal.

I should hate this book. I really, really should. What with a man sitting on a "thrown" and words missing, punctuation missing, names spelled wrong, shock for shock's sake, telling-not-showing and the misuse of the

word "literally".

I can't hate or even get mad at this book. It was self-published and I got it for free, so nothing lost except for a little time and space on my Kindle. But I applaud Mr. Burks for coming up with something fairly original (No this is not a rip off of Hunger Games or Battle Royal.) Really, the book's worst crime is the complacency that self-publishing can lend a person. This book is in terrible need of an editor. If this book was this poorly edited and dull, *then* I would have been angry.

But, I kind of loved it. I was entertained, bad writing and all.

It's bad, the shock value (A character was kicked so hard and so many times her intestines were trampled on), the plot holes (They wear human skin but the human meat in the pot had skin on it), the predictable "twists", the one-note characters, the none-too-bright protagonist, the necrophilia, the child death...but it was terrible the way the DooM novels are terrible. It was bad the way a bad horror movie is bad. It was all kind of...boyish. While I will not deny the best part of this book, by far, is the title and cover, I had to see how it ended.

Unfortunately the ending disappointed me greatly. We spend the last quarter of a book focusing on A Thing but in the end that Thing is not achieved because it could Never Be Achieved. It was a let down because it was poorly constructed, because of the telling-not-showing writing.

There are two more books in this series. Will I get the others?

I want to say no, but...

Linsey says

Although fairly brutal, I liked the overall premise of this book. The terror of being kidnapped, having to fight for your survival—no matter the cost—and the horrific revelation on how the characters came to be there; it was these aspects of the book that kept me reading.

Honestly, I didn't really like any of the characters. Most were either weak or selfish, naive or just plain stupid—the nonsense with the chits and loan system reinforced this. Some of their behaviour could be put down to denial but I wasn't convinced of this.

Stephen, our underdog, almost became likeable near the end but even in his moment of opportunistic revenge he fell short.

Admittedly, the book ended on enough of a cliffhanger that I immediately bought the second book and this picks up where the first story ends, so we'll see if my opinion of Stephen can be swayed.

I did find some of the editing and typos frustrating throughout. Annoyingly it seemed to be the same errors reoccurring, suggesting that this either wasn't officially edited at all or was done so poorly.

Tina Muraski says

This is the first book of the overdone trilogy, authors are so hot on right now. While this book was okay, the next two were BAD! I did finish all 3 books, so I wanted to review for someone considering starting the series.

First and foremost, reading this "trilogy" was like watching a train wreck; painful but you continue to watch

in amazement. OR, like watching a stupid B movie; you keep watching to see if it really can get worse...and it does.

The most glaring (and annoying) issue is grammar! Misspelled words, words used out of context, duplicate words, choppy sentences...you name it...litter the books. While the first book had the least errors, the grammar continues to deteriorate in the second and third books. An example is the authors use of the word "thumbs" while referring to a person with one hand...TWICE! It was as though he was furiously writing his story but had no one edit. Or, if he did have an editor, they should be fired!

Finally, the story idea is interesting, and I think it had the possibility to be good, but it just wasn't. The characters are underdeveloped and often, stubborn, unbelievable and exasperating. The premise is "grand" but the author did not do it justice. Hurried explanations when there should be more information, and drawn out dialogue when it's the last thing you want to read. And still, at the end of the third book, no "end" to the story.

My suggestion is not to waste your time or money on the series. If you do want to read them, stop after the first. Or, if you really must read the entire series...I told you so!

Donna says

Epic Game

This is quite truly a terrifying yet epic tale. A horrific twist reminiscent of some of the reality television shows playing weekly. How far will the common man or woman for that matter go to survive? How much will they pay to find d out? Join The Game if you dare. A well written and very graphic story. I dare you.

Charles Ray says

If you like stories that explore the darker side of human nature, you'll enjoy reading Flesh Worn Stone by John Burks, Jr. I received a free copy of this novel in exchange for my review.

Steven Alexander awakes in a cage along with five other people, including his wife, Rebecca. He has no idea where they are, or how they came there, only remembering that a group of masked men invaded his Houston home, killed his two sons, and abducted him and Rebecca. Slowly, he comes to realize that he has been transported to a living hell, a place where hundreds of other similar captives are forced to participate in the Game – a competition to the death, where one must win in order to survive, and where losers become the meal of the day.

Determined not only to survive, but to get vengeance for his son's deaths, and escape, Steven learns that a person is capable of doing things that are so far from the reality that he grew up in, he finds himself on the verge of losing his mind, and his humanity. Most disturbing, though, is his discovery that his fellow captives are not what they first appear to be.

Burks weaves a tale that is not for the faint of heart or overly sensitive. Descriptions of the Game's competitions, and their aftermath, are graphic and disturbing. He takes us deeper into the human psyche than will be comfortable for some readers, but if your stomach can take it, the insight gained is worth the journey. The ending of this book will disappoint some, but sets readers up well for the next in the series. Entertaining is hardly an appropriate word for Flesh Worn Stone. Chilling is perhaps a better description.

Janie Johnson says

Wow I am not quite sure what to think of this story. I am still absorbing the content but I can say it was both disturbing but fascinating at the same time. To me it felt like the hunger games on triple steroids. This book was definitely plot driven rather than character driven which is ok as long as you have a plot that works. I did not really like any of the characters in this story at all, and to see what people will do in a situation like this is crazy because I can really see it happening in reality.

The idea behind the story is a man and wife, Steven & Rebecca get taken to this island after hearing their boys shot and killed. They are stripped down and placed in blue jumpsuits. They wake up in a cage with 5 other people on this, what they thought to be, deserted island. Each night an alarm sounds signaling "the game" has started and 2 people are chosen to either fight, kill, rape, or self mutilate. If someone succeeds they get a mark on their head. If they get 5 marks they are free.

Let's talk about Steven for a moment. Who would be the closest to a favorite in the story. He is reserved, quiet, trusting and very non confrontational. Putting him in 'the games' is like putting a poodle in the middle of rabid Great Danes. And when I first started reading I really felt kind of sorry for him. And then I watched him completely change throughout the story due the setting, circumstances and just plain trying to survive. The Author really knows how to make his readers cringe.

However, I felt like the story was predictable in some parts and I also felt like the Author wrote these people to be the dumbest people on the planet. I had to shake my head several times. I also wished that I could port there to kill a few of them myself. I also have to say that this book is not for the faint of heart, it is very graphic. So the author used great imagery, it was almost over the top. I really did not know what I was getting into when I started this, but I had to know what happened so I kept on with it. Almost like when there is an accident and people just have to see what happened no matter how bad it is.

I am not sure if I can even recommend this book. I guess if you love gore and people with absolutely no morals, then this is probably a book for you. I think the Author is a good writer I just feel like the story was a bit over the top and if that was what he had in mind, then he did a great job. I am rating this a 3 star because it was very engaging and the whole story was non stop action from the minute I started the book all the way to the end. There was no time to pause for the cause, no boring back stories, and no long drawn out wordiness, just non stop action. Who doesn't love that...

Kelly says

While this book was very graphic and disturbing, if you can get past that (or if you like that kind of thing - like the Saw movies, but more intense), it's really a pretty good book. Unique premise, which is quite unusual anymore, and very hard to put down. The way it ended made me immediately want to pick up the second book in the trilogy (but upon reading the reviews for that, and knowing how disappointed I've been with second and third books in trilogies, I'm now reconsidering).

Graham says

I'm the kind of guy that is neither squeamish or prude. There are some interesting ideas in this novel and respect has to be given for originality. However I am undecided about reading the sequel as it went beyond horror in my opinion and was quite sickening in places. The violence felt too gratuitous. I am all for dark and disturbing but, as others have mentioned, the characters are very weak and there is a tangible lack of emotion or real empathy. Sometimes it just feels like a case of "think of the sickest, cruelest things and include". This means that whilst initially shocking, you get numbed and feel a "yeah yeah yeah" response. Three stars then as its by no means a bad novel - take away the gore, torture and setting and you are left with a decidedly average one.

Paul Penney says

Sound advice for authors: Before publishing a novel, learn how to spell words and/or use a dictionary, and learn the basic grammar of the English language. Using 'thrown' instead of throne, spacing errors, ending a sentence with a preposition, and referring to Ed McMahon as "Ed McMann" are just a few examples, and I didn't get past page 20!

Sound advice for readers: Get any book besides this one!

Celyn says

I'm still reeling from this one...extremely dark and disturbing. There are scenes which are quite graphic and horrific, but the most disturbing aspects are the atrocities humans are willing to commit and the nightmarish behavior we are willing to display towards each other. I'm still debating on whether or not I am brave enough to attempt to read the sequel.

Harlee says

Reading the reviews, I thought, "well how horrifying can this book be?" It's pretty sick. I mean grotesque and disturbing. That, along with no attachment or interest in the story, is why I am giving up on this book almost at the halfway point. There's a part of me that wants to know why all of these people were kidnapped and who is behind it all, but it's a very small part and my curiosity is not interested enough in this book to finish it.

John says

Just stay away. This book is graphic, disgusting and pointless. I suppose it was meant to be a mystery, but it just came across as an excuse for the author to include every demented thing he could imagine.
